

DID YOU KNOW

..... that the average dog can run about 19 mph. Greyhounds are the fastest dogs on earth and can run at speeds of 45 mph.

..... that one survey reports that 33% of dog owners admit they talk to their dogs on the phone and leave messages on answering machines while they are away.

..... that dog grooming dates back to the 17th century, as evidenced by a German sketch of a poodle clipped in a fashion very similar to the Continental style that is still popular today? The practice reached its peak at the French court under the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI, but today many pet stylists have chosen to go in decidedly different directions: a "creative grooming" category at many shows rewards only the zaniest of looks, achieved through the use of nontoxic dyes and inventive scissor-work.

..... that dogs were used in combat by almost every ancient civilization, including the Egyptians, Greeks and Persians and, of course, the Romans, who formed entire battalions of their army that consisted solely of mastiffs in spiked collars and chain-mail armor? Dogs were also used in wartime for more peaceful tasks, most notably as Prussian messengers during the region's *Severn Years' War* with Russia, and again for the same purpose by the Union troops during the *American Civil War*.

..... that the phrase "the dog days of summer" refers to the placement of Sirius, the largest star in the *Canis Major* ("big dog") constellation, in the night sky? For most of July and August, Sirius rises and sets in coordination with the sun, and the ancient Romans believed that the brightness of Sirius added to that of the sun was responsible for the warmer weather. We now know that the earth's tilt is responsible for the change in seasons, but the old expression has persisted nonetheless.

..... that the oldest dog on record was a 29-year-old cattle dog named Bluey from Victoria, Australia? While there is no evidence to support that unusual diets contribute to longer lives in canines, Bluey's regime was certainly noteworthy in that his owners fed him significant amounts of emu and kangaroo meat. Another famously old dog, 27-year-old Bramble from Somerset, England, subsisted on the same vegan diet of rice, lentils and organic vegetables as her owner.

..... that, throughout the ages, dogs have provided rich inspiration to artists working in various media? Canine subjects have been represented on Greek urns and pitchers; on Roman sarcophagi; in a statue of Salome sculpted by the Dutchman Engebrectsz circa 1490; in the works of many of the great Flemish painters; and, most recently, in the pictures of noted photographers Alvarez Bravo (of Mexico) and William Eggleston (of the U.S.), the latter of whom is widely recognized for his role in gaining acceptance for color photography as a legitimate art form.

..... that dogs occupied the same significant role in Greek mythology as they do in modern society? Some of the famous dogs in Greco-Roman lore included Odysseus' faithful Argus, who

never gave up hoping for his master's return; Laelaps, the "golden hound" entrusted with the protection of Zeus; and the fear-inducing, three-headed Cerberus, who guarded the gates to the underworld and entered the realm of the living only once, when he was forcibly brought to Earth by Hercules as part of the hero's 12 Labors.

..... that the first dog show was held in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England in 1859? This inaugural event was limited to pointers and setters, but soon a second show cropped up in Birmingham that accepted spaniels and hounds as well. The National Dog Show Birmingham continues to be held to this day and, along with the Crufts show (also held in England) and the Westminster Dog Show (held in New York), is one of the most prestigious canine competitions in the world.

.... that a dog's nose has many uses beyond just detecting scents? With their only pores located on their paws, dogs cannot sweat this explains why they always pant in hot weather but their cold, wet noses help regulate their body temperature. In addition, the pattern of every dog's nose is as unique as a human fingerprint. Tell that to your puppy the next time he tears up a pair of shoes and stares at you with that innocent "Who me?" look.

..... that the English word "dog" comes from the Old English "docga" which is most likely derived from the Proto-Germanic "dukkon", a word signifying strength. The association of dogs with physical might makes sense, given the dog's position as the first animal domesticated by humans. "Docga" also incorporates the diminutive -ga that was a component of many animal names in Old English, including "picga" (pig) and "frogga" (frog).